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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000659

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: MARCH 2 SECURITY MEETING PRODUCES LITTLE

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)  
AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Because of the latest spat with the Kurds, PM Jafari canceled a morning meeting of top political leaders that had been scheduled to discuss the security situation in Iraq. After much pushing from post, the meeting was held the evening of March 2. However, all the participants could agree on was to schedule a curfew for March 3. The Kurdish Alliance, Tawafuq, and the Iraqi National Accord (the National Salvation Front - NSF) have each sent letters to Shia Islamist Coalition (List 555) leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim demanding that the Shia revoke the nomination of Prime Minister-nominee Ibrahim Jafari. An attack on Tawafuq leader Adnan Dulaymi's car left one bodyguard dead and five others wounded. END SUMMARY

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Baghdad  
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¶2. (C) Tawafuq leader Adnan Dulaymi's son told PolOff that unknown assailants shot at his father's limousine in the Ghazaliya area of Baghdad on March 2. One of Dulaymi's bodyguards was killed and five others wounded. Reportedly, the elder Dulaymi had just left the vehicle for another in his package after one of his limousine's tires became flat. While his staff was changing the tire to his stationary limousine, it came under fire.

¶3. (C) Sadr City District Advisory Council (DAC) chair Hassan Shama told PolFSN in a March 2 phone conversation that an attack by a suicide bomber killed four people and wounded six in Sadr City earlier that day. The attack took place near the Ishbilila Bank. The suicide bomber was riding a bus with ten other people when he detonated his suicide vest.

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Jafari Annoyed with Talabani  
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¶4. (C) Prime Minister Jafari told Charge March 2 that President Talabani's outburst in the press after Jafari's February 28 trip to Turkey was inappropriate. Jafari said Talabani should learn to keep their disputes out of the media. Jafari planned to ignore the outburst; any concession to Talabani just led Talabani to seek more, he commented bitterly. Jafari immediately agreed with our point that the expanded security group meeting, planned as follow up to the PM's February 25 meeting, should not be postponed. The Iraqi political leaders had to distinguish between a security crisis on one side, and normal political competition in a democratic system on the other. The security track should not suffer due to the political competition, Charge underlined. Jafari asked for our help in bringing Talabani, Barzani and SCIRI to the meeting.

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Evening Meeting Produces Curfew, Speeches  
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15. (C) Charge and Poloffs worked this during March 2 afternoon and the meeting took place March 2 evening at the PM's office. Only one Sunni Arab of note attended. In a three hour session of political speechmaking and mutual recrimination, the only conclusion was to impose a curfew on vehicle traffic in Baghdad for part of March 3. All agreed the country is still on the edge of terrible civil strife; they could not agree on any kind of action plan.

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Sadr's Plans Unclear  
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16. (C) In the midday March 2 meeting, Jafari opined that the security situation is still very tense; the Shia street is still angry and Moqtada as-Sadr is active. He noted that Ayatollah Sistani's position had shifted towards one where he is less likely to get in front of the Shia community if anger boils over. (He attributed this to the influence of Ayatollah Mohammed Said al-Hakim.) In response to our question, Jafari said he was unaware of what Moqtada as-Sadr's next plans were. On the spot, he had his chief of staff, Abdelaziz at-Tamimi, call the Interior Minister to see if Sadr had advised them of any demonstrations. The Interior Minister said he had not. Jafari agreed with our point that Sadr might not inform the Interior Minister of Sadrism activities and that a close watch on Sadr was vital. (Comment: No one from the Sadristes attended the March 2 evening meeting. End Comment.)

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Kurds Have Taken the First Step  
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17. (C) Later on March 2, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Masud Barzani informed Charge and UK Ambassador Patey that the Kurdish Alliance, Tawafuq, and the Iraqi National Accord (the National Salvation Front - NSF) have each sent letters to Shia Coalition leader Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim demanding that the Shia revoke the nomination of Prime Minister-elect Ibrahim Jafari. Although Iraqi National Dialogue Front leader Saleh Mutlak is currently out of the country, Barzani stated that he would also be sending a separate letter to al-Hakim. Barzani appeared hazy on the details of the choreography following the receipt of the letter, but insisted that the Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party should be a part of the NSF to emphasize that the group is truly interested in national unity.

18. (C) Charge asked Barzani to put aside politics and accept Jafari's call to meet on the evening of March 2 to discuss the worsening security situation in Iraq. Charge again stressed the importance of separating efforts to contain sectarian violence from the negotiations to stand up a new government. Barzani agreed that the Kurds would send Deputy Prime Minister Shaways and Planning Minister Barham Saleh to represent the Kurdish Alliance. He irritably added, however, that while security was a legitimate concern for all Iraqis, a meeting of the various party leaders would not serve to address the underlying issues. The key to stabilizing the security situation, Barzani insisted, is to arrest Moqtada al-Sadr and neutralize the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). (Barzani recalled that in 2004, he had recommended to then CPA Administrator Bremer that al-Sadr should be "dealt with.") It would be better to confront Sadr and the JAM now, mused Barzani, before they could consolidate their position and gain in strength and numbers. Masrur Barzani, Barzani's son, commented that the Iraqi Police would be incapable of confronting the JAM in a direct clash.

19. (C) Also on March 2, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Chief of Staff and newly elected KDP Council of Representatives (CoR) member Fawzi Hariri told PolOff that Jafari's trip to Turkey further damaged his relationship with the Kurds. (Note: Although Jafari did not directly notify the Presidency Council of his trip, Foreign Minister (and Kurdish official) Zebari found out in time to insist that Deputy Foreign Minister (and SCIRI member) Hamid al-Bayati accompany Jafari. End Note.) Hariri added that Jafari is extremely shortsighted if he thinks he has the PM nomination wrapped up. Previously, the Kurds were content to wait for factions within the Shia Coalition to break away. But after Jafari's Ankara visit, the Kurds have lost all patience. Hariri said he hoped that al-Hakim would leave the Coalition, bringing SCIRI, Fadhila party and perhaps some DAWA moderates with him to join with the Kurds, Tawafuq and Allawi.

SATTERFIELD